UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/139
16 May 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-second session
Items 20, 29, 36, 37, 39, 40,
41, 59, 61, 70, 98, 99 and 113
of the preliminary list*

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

ASSISTANCE IN MINE CLEARANCE

QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND RELATED MATTERS

QUESTION OF CYPRUS

PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

SECTORAL POLICY QUESTIONS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

* A/52/50.

97-13123 (E) 230697 260697

/...

Letter dated 7 May 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the 97th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union was held at Seoul from 10 to 15 April 1997, at the invitation of the Parliament of the Republic of Korea. The Conference brought together 572 members of Parliament from 118 countries and the representatives of 25 observer delegations.

As the host country of the 97th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the results of the Conference.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 20, 2º, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 59, 61, 70, 98, 99 and 113 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) PARK Soo Gil
Permanent Representative

Annex

97th CONFERENCE OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

The 97th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union* was held in Seoul (Republic of Korea) from 10 to 15 April 1997, at the invitation of the Parliament of the Republic of Korea. The Conference brought together 572 members of Parliament from 118 countries and the representatives of 25 observer delegations.

In the course of its proceedings, the Conference adopted the attached resolutions.

---

* **The Inter-Parliamentary Union's membership was as follow as at 15 April 1997:**

Members (138)

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Associate Members

Andean Parliament, Latin American Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

CO-OPERATION FOR WORLD AND REGIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY, AS WELL AS FOR RESPECT FOR ALL FORMS OF THE SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE OF STATES

Resolution adopted without a vote by the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Seoul, 14 April 1997)

The 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Bearing in mind that one of the goals of the United Nations, as set out in its Charter, is to maintain international peace and security, and to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace,

Mindful that, by alleviating international tensions and strengthening confidence between States, the end of the Cold War has created a climate conducive to consolidating international co-operation for the establishment of security and stability at the international and regional levels,

Concerned by the dangers which still threaten security and stability, including ethnic, nationalist and religious disputes and tensions, as well as the arms race and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in certain regions, all of which are compounded by the growing threat of terrorism,

Mindful of the other threats and dangers to the security of persons, societies and States, which stem from environmental degradation, poverty, drug use, political unrest, the growing number of refugees and displaced persons, and human rights violations,

Considering that it is incumbent upon all States to co-operate in establishing security, stability and peace while respecting the sovereignty and independence of all States equally,

Recalling that the United Nations increasingly needs the support of regional organisations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, in resolving global problems,

Drawing attention to the report presented in 1992 by the previous UN Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peace-making and Peacekeeping", as well as the supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" presented on the occasion of the celebration of the UN's 50th anniversary in 1995,

Emphasising that national sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States are cornerstones of transnational co-operation,

Considering that the principle of non-interference is consistent with the international community's duty to protect inalienable human rights and oppressed minorities, and that the violation of fundamental human rights can pose a threat to international security and stability,

Welcoming the latest developments in the field of disarmament and arms control, including the signing of the Treaty on a complete nuclear test ban and the creation of zones free from nuclear weapons in various regions of the world,

Mindful of the pressing need to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between the United Nations and regional organisations with a view to establishing peace, security and stability at the international and regional levels,

Asserting that humanitarian aid must be granted in cases of emergency and times of crisis, in accordance with the humanitarian principles of impartiality and integrity, in observance of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States and with the consent of Governments, where such authority exists,

Concerned by the problems posed by national laws that have extraterritorial effects,

Stressing the key role that parliamentary diplomacy plays in establishing regional and universal security and stability, either through the support which parliamentary institutions give to action by the United Nations and regional organisations in this field or by the efforts they are making or can make to prevent, end and alleviate conflicts,

1. *Invites* all States to fulfil their obligations under international law, to refrain from the threat or use of force and to respect the inviolability of the borders of States and territorial integrity, the right of peoples to self-determination, the equality of States in respect of sovereignty and non-interference in their internal affairs, and human rights;

2. *Stresses* the need to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations with regard to the settlement of international disputes in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Charter, and to strengthen its means of establishing international peace and security and settling all disputes without distinction or discrimination, taking pains to ensure that it has the financial, human and technical resources it needs to fulfil its mission;

3. *Calls* for the strengthening of co-operation and co-ordination between regional organisations and the United Nations in the fields of preventive diplomacy and the re-establishment, maintenance and consolidation of peace and security, by means of co-ordination, dialogue, diplomatic support and the provision of technical and human resources for UN operations and for participation in such operations;

4. *Asks* all actors of the international community to step up their efforts for arms control and disarmament, particularly the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;

5. *Appeals* to all countries which have not yet done so to ratify promptly the Chemical Weapons Convention;

6. *Recalls* the resolution on "Worldwide ban on anti-personnel mines and the need for mine clearance for humanitarian purposes" adopted by the 96th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Beijing, September 1996);

7. *Underlines* the importance of such confidence-building measures as the promotion of openness and restraint in the production, deployment and transfer of armaments, the systematic exchange of military missions, the formation of regional risk reduction centres, arrangements for the free flow of information and the monitoring of regional arms control and disarmament agreements;

8. *Stresses* the need for co-ordination in the setting-up of international forces for preventive deployment in crisis areas;

9. *Urges* all States or groups of States to refrain from using coercive measures in the conduct of international relations or enacting national laws that have extraterritorial effects on any other State;

10. *Calls on* Governments and Parliaments to facilitate recourse to eminent persons for diplomatic initiatives aimed at preventing and resolving conflicts;

11. *Expresses* keen interest in efforts to ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, the last remaining legacy of the Cold War, as well as hope for further progress in the Four-Party Talks and the realisation of multilateral dialogue between the Parliaments of the countries concerned;

12. *Calls on* Governments to respect everyone's right to speak out on human rights issues in all parts of the world;

13. *Urges* the United Nations to co-operate actively and interact with the IPU in the interests of conflict settlement and preventive diplomacy;

14. *Appeals* to all Parliaments the world over:

    (a) To intensify parliamentary diplomacy in order to contribute to international and regional security and stability based on the universal principles of non-interference, equal status, territorial integrity, independence of all States and respect for human rights, as set out in the UN Charter;

    (b) To spare no efforts to prevent armed conflicts by identifying and analysing the causes with a view to finding solutions;

    (c) To secure contributions to humanitarian relief efforts in cases of emergency, while overseeing their use as closely as possible;

    (d) To promote the development of democratisation and good governance;

    (e) To combat any ethnic, nationalistic or religious excesses by the State;

    (f) To hold parliamentary debates on the issues raised in this resolution.

SAFEGUARDING THE STATUS OF THE HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM AND UTILISING ALL POSSIBLE MEANS LIKELY TO THWART MANOEUVRES WHICH ARE PREJUDICIAL TO ITS IDENTITY AND GRAVELY ENDANGER SECURITY AND THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE AREA

Resolution adopted without a vote by the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Séoul, 14 April 1997)*

The 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Reaffirming its support for the Middle East peace process and all its achievements,

Recalling once more the resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to bolster efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East,

Also recalling United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for the revocation of any and all Israeli measures and actions designed to alter the legal status, the demographic composition and geographical structure of Jerusalem and considering such measures invalid,

Expressing deep concern at the new settlement activities in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, and in particular at the construction of a settlement at the Jebel Abu Ghneim area in East Jerusalem,

Stressing that these settlements are illegal, in breach of international law and a major obstacle to peace,

Concerned about the difficulties facing the Middle East peace process and their negative impact on the living conditions of all peoples of the region, and more especially the Palestinian people,

Deploring the increasing recourse to violence since the dangerous stalling of the peace process,

Reaffirming resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, particularly at the 77th, 81st, 84th and 90th Conferences, on bolstering efforts to give impetus to peace moves in the Middle East,

---

* After the text was adopted, the Israeli delegation expressed its opposition to the resolution as a whole.

1. *Denounces* the Israeli settlement policy in the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem;

2. *Calls upon* the Israeli authorities to refrain from all actions or measures, including settlement activities, which alter the facts on the ground, pre-empting the final status negotiations, and have negative implications for the Middle East peace process;

3. *Calls upon* Israel, as the occupying power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations under the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949;

4. *Calls upon* all parties, and especially Israelis and Palestinians, to continue and speed up, in the interests of peace and security, their negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed bases, and Israel in particular to implement within the prescribed time-limits the agreements concluded, and in particular the Oslo Agreements;

5. *Calls upon* the Israeli government to desist from confiscating the identity cards of the Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem and to revoke the policy that prevents them from repairing their homes or building new ones to meet their urgent housing needs;

6. *Urgently appeals,* as part of the peace process, for an end to acts of violence and terrorism, whatever their source;

7. *Appeals* to the United Nations to bring its influence to bear forthwith in order to protect all citizens, all institutions and all historical monuments in Jerusalem, and particularly the Palestinian institutions pending the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 and the achievement of peace;

8. *Recommends* that the situation in Jerusalem be monitored through the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions, which will report to the Inter-Parliamentary Council in Cairo (September 1997).

INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO MEET THE EMERGENCY SITUATION IN ALBANIA AND IN ZAIRE

Resolution adopted without a vote by the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference
(Seoul, 14 April 1997)

I. REGARDING THE SITUATION IN ALBANIA

The 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Considering that current political, social and economic events have given rise to a humanitarian emergency situation and revealed the weaknesses of the political and administrative structure of the Albanian State,

Bearing in mind that such a large-scale humanitarian emergency can be tackled only through appropriate action on Albanian territory if security is to be re-established,

Recognising that the country is in a predicament from which it will be unable to recover unless foreign aid is provided,

Deeply concerned that the humanitarian situation in Albania is so grave that international aid to the country is urgently needed to overcome the present emergency; such aid, in order to be effective, should be accompanied by measures aimed at promoting reconciliation, governance, and economic and financial rehabilitation,

Considering the importance of security in Albania and its bearing on the delivery of humanitarian aid,

1. *Supports* the efforts being made by some countries* to set up, following a request by the Albanian authorities, a multilateral protection force under the aegis of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations, which should contribute to the creation of the security conditions needed to deliver aid and carry out more general assistance activities;

---

* Austria, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain and Turkey

2. *Stresses* the importance of reconstructing, on a firm basis and with the support of the international community, the administrative structure and the police force, which are essential to guaranteeing civil coexistence in a democratic system and the sound development of economic activities;

3. *Underlines* the primary importance of holding free and fair elections throughout the country as soon as is feasible, which will enable government to be fully representative;

4. *Expresses satisfaction* with the policies and work of the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, especially as regards the re-establishment of civil coexistence in the country;

5. *Urges* the Albanian authorities to work closely with international financial institutions to pursue financial reform;

6. *Calls on* the Albanian authorities to adopt the necessary acts and regulations to better govern the banking sector and financial corporations;

7. *Encourages* all Governments and IPU Member Parliaments to continue to assist Albania by granting humanitarian, financial and economic aid, and to provide legal and administrative expertise.

II. REGARDING THE SITUATION IN ZAIRE

The 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Expressing the serious concern of the representatives of the world's parliaments over the continuing conflict in Zaire and its grave consequences in terms of human suffering, including reported massacres in the areas of conflict, and threats to regional stability.

Welcoming regional initiatives (such as those of Nairobi and Lomé) and the recent resumption of peace talks in South Africa, together with the efforts of the international community to resolve the conflict;

1. *Appeals* to the parties to adhere to and implement the United Nations five-point peace plan for Zaire, which calls for:

   (i) immediate cessation of hostilities;

   (ii) withdrawal of all external forces, including mercenaries;

   (iii) reaffirmation of respect for the national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Zaire and the other States of the Great Lakes region;

   (iv) protection and security for all refugees and displaced persons and facilitation of access to humanitarian assistance;

(v) rapid and peaceful settlement of the crisis through dialogue, the electoral process and the convening of an international conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region to achieve lasting peace in the region;

2. *Further appeals* to the international community to promote the implementation of the said plan by:

(i) lending greater and sustained support to the ongoing negotiation process begun between the warring parties and supporting the efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Zaire;

(ii) increasing assistance to the refugee population and providing additional resources to neighbouring countries so as to enable them to cope with the massive influx of refugees arising from this conflict, with special attention to the plight of women, children and the elderly who are the most seriously affected by the conflict;

(iii) ensuring total protection of the population in the areas of conflict and sending an independent international commission under UN authority to investigate reports of massacres in these areas;

(iv) refraining from supplying arms to the warring parties;

(v) supporting all efforts to create conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections with a view to establishing a legitimate democratic government in Zaire;

(vi) facilitating the work of the joint UN/OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region;

3. *Urges* all countries to respect relevant international instruments prohibiting the recruitment, training, financing and deployment of mercenaries.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. The Committee for Sustainable Development held its annual session from 13 to 15 March 1997 at the Union's Headquarters in Geneva.

2. Six Committee members were in attendance: Mrs. I. Aykut (Turkey), Mr. C. L. Caccia (Canada), Mr. N. Chitty La Roche (Venezuela), Mr. B.A. Godana (Kenya), Mr. M.A Hamid (Bangladesh) and Mr. T.A. Ismail (Egypt). As Mr. Sorkhoh (Kuwait) is no longer a parliamentarian, his seat is now vacant. At the start of the meeting, the Committee elected Mr. Chitty La Roche as its President and Mr. Caccia as its Vice-President.

A. Overall review of parliamentary action to implement *Agenda 21*

3. The Committee undertook an overall review of parliamentary action to implement *Agenda 21* on the basis of the results of three surveys conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union during 1992-93, 1994-95 and 1996-97.

4. The first two surveys focused directly on the issues dealt with by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) within the framework of the follow-up to Rio. They made it possible firstly to compile specific data regarding the measures taken by parliaments with a view to applying UNCED recommendations, and secondly, to evaluate the means available to parliaments as well as the obstacles they had to overcome.

5. The third questionnaire was specifically designed with a view to the overall evaluation which the United Nations is to make in June 1997. It was drafted with the aim of supplementing and contrasting the results of the first two questionnaires with the help of qualitative data reflecting the views of the MPs concerned on the impact of the Rio Conference within their Parliaments.

6. With respect to the third questionnaire, the Committee noted that this time the answers came almost exclusively from MPs who are well informed about the work of their respective parliaments on environmental issues and who are personally involved in this field. It also noted that in the case of some parliaments, replies were received from several MPs with different political leanings or from members of both Houses, thus making it possible to obtain different points of view and gain a better understanding of the ways in which these parliaments work.

7. The report approved by the Committee (see Annex I) represents an analysis rather than a summary of replies received. It is a reflection of the major trends which emerged from the three surveys. However, marginal positions have also been included in order to qualify and enrich the analysis.

B. Recommendations for future action by parliaments and the IPU

8. Based on the results of the overall analysis of parliamentary action to implement *Agenda 21*, the Committee strongly recommended that parliaments make fuller use of existing parliamentary mechanisms and procedures to address sustainable development issues. In particular, the Committee recommended that those parliaments that have not yet established a parliamentary body dealing with sustainable development or, at least, environmental issues consider doing so. It also believed that the IPU could at a future point usefully evaluate the experience of having such bodies.

9. Similarly, the Committee recommended that parliaments equip themselves with the necessary means for carrying out their work in the field of sustainable development, *inter alia* by obtaining the required information. In this context, the Committee also recommended that parliaments examine the feasibility of establishing an outside resource reporting to parliament on sustainable development issues, for example in the form of a parliamentary commissioner or advisory body.

10. As for the IPU, the Committee believed that the Union should continue to devote a significant share of its resources and debates to sustainable development issues. These debates not only offer an occasion for members of parliament to examine specific aspects of sustainable development, exchange experiences and seek solutions, but also provide a basis for the IPU to continue urging parliaments to take further action. The Committee recommended that when choosing issues for debate, preference be given to clearly defined topics of global importance which require inter-parliamentary and inter-governmental co-operation.

11. The IPU could also play a role in facilitating dissemination and access to relevant information. More specifically, the Committee recommended that the IPU consider publishing a brief manual or brochure in co-operation with the United Nations explaining where and how information already in the public domain can be obtained. The Committee also encouraged the IPU to continue in its plans to help parliaments obtain access to and establish a presence on the *Internet*.

12. The IPU should also continue to facilitate direct contact and sharing of experiences between members of parliament working on environment and sustainable development issues. In this regard, the Committee was very pleased to note that plans were well under way to publish the IInd world directory of parliamentary bodies dealing with environment issues. Moreover, the Committee encouraged regional and sub-regional parliamentary organisations to organise meetings of parliamentarians to discuss sustainable development issues and believed that the IPU could lend its support to such meetings.

13. The Committee felt that it should of course strengthen its own involvement in matters relating to sustainable development, and decided to devote some time at its next session to examining how it could best meet its expanding responsibilities and with what means.

14. The Committee reaffirmed that its continued involvement would of course entail monitoring and evaluation of parliamentary as well as governmental action. That being said, the Committee decided not to make a new evaluation of parliamentary action on the basis of a survey at its next session. Instead, it expressed the wish to hold one or more hearings on a particular issue and to prepare a political statement for the Inter-Parliamentary Council. After further discussion, the Committee agreed to consider the issue of declining official development assistance and financial aid in general at its next session.

C. Preparation of a draft declaration on « Measures required to change consumption and production patterns with a view to sustainable development »

15. The Committee had proposed the inclusion of the subject « *Measures required to change consumption and production patterns with a view to sustainable development* » on the agenda of the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Seoul, April 1997). To facilitate the work of the Conference in producing a final statement on this subject, the Committee prepared a draft Declaration of the Conference based on written contributions by National Groups received thus far (see Annex II). As can be seen from this text, the Committee believes that the Union should seize this opportunity to reiterate the policy statements made at Rio on transfer of appropriate technologies

D. Implementation of the Inter-Parliamentary Council's recommendation that National Parliaments and their members should be recognized as a "major group" as defined by *Agenda 21*

16. At the suggestion of the Committee for Sustainable Development, the Inter-Parliamentary Council recommended at its 158th session that Parliaments should be considered a « major group » as defined throughout *Agenda 21*. It invited the Committee to develop a formal proposal to this effect and submit it to the United Nations in the context of the UN review of progress since the Rio Conference.

17. The Committee was informed of efforts already undertaken by the Secretariat to introduce this suggestion into the inter-governmental process presently reviewing progress since UNCED in preparation for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly. After further discussion, the Committee adopted a **Statement on parliaments as a « major group »** (see annex III for the full text).

18. The Committee requested the Secretary General to forward this text to the United Nations so that it may be taken into account in its review. It also asked him to transmit its proposal for reformulating the only paragraph which refers to parliaments in the draft final declaration for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly which is to be reviewed by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Specifically, the Committee suggested that the second sentence of paragraph 17(c) be reformulated as follows:

Parliaments should be added to the major groups identified in Agenda 21, *as should such* social actors and groups as the elderly, the media, educators *and* the financial community and *they* should be acknowledged and included in the decision-making process.

19. Finally, the Committee invited the Council to call on all National Groups to take appropriate urgent action with a view to seeking the support of their respective country's delegation to the CSD, and subsequently also to the Special Session of the General Assembly, for this proposal.

E. IPU contribution to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on *Agenda 21*

20. The Committee noted that, in conformity with the Council's earlier decision, the Union's contribution to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly would comprise the Committee's overall evaluation of parliamentary action to implement *Agenda 21* (see paragraph 7 above and Annex I) and the forthcoming 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference's Declaration on measures required to change consumption and production patterns with a view to sustainable development, of which a first draft had been prepared by the Committee (see paragraph 15 above and Annex II). The proposal that parliaments be considered as a « major group » would of course also be part of IPU's submission to the Special Session.

21. The Committee recalled that over the last several years, the IPU and itself had made significant contributions to the follow-up to *Agenda* 21. This was reflected in the UN Secretary-General's overall assessment which acknowledged that « Parliaments in many countries have been actively involved in implementation of the commitments made at UNCED. Information thereon has been reported annually to the Commission on Sustainable Development by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), based on the outcome of an annual survey. IPU also adopted declarations relevant to sustainable development, for example, on finance and technology transfer and on conservation of world fish stocks ».

22. The Committee was of the view that the experience it had accumulated over these last years demonstrated some very basic truths. First, progress in implementing *Agenda 21* had been minimal and very far from satisfactory. Second, a number of fundamental concerns remained as urgent as before, if not even more so. These included, but were not limited to wasteful consumption and production patterns, pollution, ozone-layer depletion, desertification and inadequate freshwater supplies, to mention but a few. Third, the absence of adequate financial resources and appropriate technologies played a key role, but the main problem was an absence of political will. The call for such a political will and a commitment to launch anew the « spirit of Rio » should, in the Committee's view, constitute the essence of the Union's message to the UNGA Special Session.

23. The Committee proposed that the above considerations be reflected in the speech which the IPU should deliver at the UNGA Special Session. This speech should of course also make a reference to the commitment by parliaments, as a "major group", to intensify their work in the field of sustainable development.

24. The Committee was briefed on UN plans for organising the session which indicated that usual General Assembly rules would apply. As implied in the recently concluded agreement of co-operation between the UN and the IPU, this would mean that the IPU could address the Assembly in the same manner as certain Specialized Agencies, i.e. during a « recess ». The Committee asked the Secretary General to pursue his contacts with the UN with a view to ensuring that the IPU could take the floor.

25. The Committee was also informed of UN plans to establish a working group of the whole which would meet parallel to the Special Session and would discuss and finalise the declaration of the UNGA Special Session. This meeting would be open to a wider public and there should be no problem for the IPU to participate fully in the discussions.

26. The Committee recommended that the IPU send a full delegation to represent the Union at the Special Session. As a very limited budgetary allocation had been earmarked for this purpose, the Committee expressed the hope that such a delegation could be led by the President of the Council and be composed of members of the Committee, or at a minimum, its President. The Committee hoped that other members could be included in national delegations to the Special Session, and invited the Council to make a special appeal to this effect.

27. The Committee recognised that, in order for the IPU's contribution to have any measurable impact, it was imperative that the Organisation also be represented at the upcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which would to a large extent prepare the results of the UNGA Special Session. As the CSD partly coincided with the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (it takes place from 7 to 25 April 1997) and as no funds had been foreseen for this purpose in the IPU 1997 budget, the Committee expressed the hope that its President and/or Vice-President could travel via New York on their way back from Seoul and address the CSD. It invited the Secretariat to explore the feasibility of this proposal with the UN.

F. Progress report on the preparation of the 1997 edition of the *World Directory on Parliamentary Bodies for Environment*

28. The Committee was informed of the state of preparation of the 1997 edition of the *World Directory* that will be published before the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on *Agenda 21*, in accordance with the decision taken by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 158th session (Istanbul, 20 April 1996). The Committee members took note of the work done by the Secretariat and suggested that parliaments which had not yet responded to requests for information on their environment committees be recontacted to ensure that the Directory is as complete as possible and in particular that the parliamentary bodies dealing with the environment in certain major countries are included.

G. Implementation of the results of the Tri-Partite Meeting in New York

29. The 159th session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council (Beijing, 21 September 1996) endorsed the findings and recommendations of the Tri-Partite Meeting of Parliamentary, Governmental and Inter-Governmental Representatives (UN Headquarters, 5-6 September 1996), which had focused on priority action for implementation by parliamentarians of the

results of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995). One of the Council's specific recommendations consisted of placing the issue of social development and its specific aspects on the agendas of statutory IPU Conferences.

30. Inspired by this recommendation, the Committee for Sustainable Development proposed that the IPU's Executive Committee include an item entitled "Employment in a Globalizing World" in the agenda of the 98th Conference (Cairo, September 1997). The Committee wished to point out that discussion about employment at an IPU Conference would be timely for two reasons.

31. First, unemployment is a major economic and social problem in most industrialised and industrialising countries, where it has reached crisis proportions. At the same time, low productivity underemployment is a chronic symptom of poverty, involving many hundreds of millions in developing countries.

32. Second, globalisation is not only changing patterns of employment between and within countries but is also increasing their capacity for addressing the issue. Trade liberalisation is leading to faster export growth. Intensified international competition is curbing inflationary pressures. The question therefore is in which ways public policy should evolve in order to help enhance prospects for employment growth.

33. All major international fora, including the WSSD, agreed that the goal of full employment should be the focus of national economic and social strategy. The Committee for Sustainable Development is convinced that the Union could make its own important contribution to this goal. Furthermore, the Committee believes that the UN's Division for Social Policy and Development, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and possibly also the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), could make a particularly useful contribution to the examination of this subject by the Union.

34. Finally, the Committee recalled that that Council had entrusted it with monitoring and evaluating action taken by national parliaments to implement the Summit's recommendations, and discussed how best to carry out this task without overburdening National Groups with extensive and time-consuming surveys or indeed launching a major study too soon after the Summit. After discussion, the Committee concluded that should the above-mentioned item be placed on the Conference agenda, IPU members could be asked to submit not only the traditional memoranda on the subject, but also information on action taken by their respective parliaments to follow up this particular aspect of the WSSD.

H. Parliamentary follow-up to the World Food Summit

35. The Committee noted with particular satisfaction that the Union's contribution to the World Food Summit (Rome, 13-17 November 1996) had been substantial and that the overall parliamentary input into the Summit's preparation and proceedings had been greatly appreciated by the Summit organiser - the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

36. The Committee reviewed the outcome of the Parliamentarians' Day held by the IPU on 15 November 1996 on the occasion of the World Food Summit. In particular, the Committee examined the text of the Declaration adopted by the participants in the Parliamentarians' Day and subsequently presented by the President of the IPU Council at the Summit's final plenary.

37. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Parliamentarians' Day in Rome had been successful on two levels. On the one hand, its holding during the Summit had ensured a strong presence by MPs at the Summit, who had thus been associated with the final decisions of the Summit and, by means of their Declaration, had committed themselves to the task of promoting the implementation of the Summit's Plan of Action within their respective parliaments. On the other hand it had further constituted a new practical manifestation of the concept of closer co-operation between parliaments and governments at the international level.

38. The Committee called on the Inter-Parliamentary Council to endorse the recommendations which the participants made at the Parliamentarians' Day and to urge that they be taken up by all of the Union's members. The Committee welcomed the fact that the Declaration contained a recommendation for the Inter-Parliamentary Union to set up, in co-operation with FAO, a mechanism for parliamentary monitoring of the commitments made in Rome. The Committee supported this action-oriented proposal and committeed itself to work towards its realisation.

39. The Committee noted with satisfaction that discussions had already been initiated between the Director General of the FAO and the IPU Secretary General with a view to preparing an agreement between the two institutions modelled on the agreement with the UN. The Committee expressed the wish that such an agreement offering a framework for concerted action by governments and parliaments in the field of food and agriculture could be concluded.

40. In the course of exchange of views on possible forms of parliamentary follow-up to the World Food Summit, members of the Committee considered the prospect of a joint IPU-FAO Conference on agricultural production and environment in Rome in 1998.

I. Miscellaneous

41. At the end of its meeting, the Committee discussed the vacancy which had occurred as a result of the departure of Mr. Sorkhoh from Kuwait, who had lost his parliamentary seat in the last elections. The Committee noted that Arab countries were already represented on the Committee, whereas the countries in transition were not, and in particular the independent Republics which had emerged from the former Soviet Union and which faced massive problems relating to the protection of the environment and achievement of sustainable development. The Committee felt that the IPU's and its own work on sustainable development would be considerably enriched if the new member to be elected to the Committee in Seoul could be from one of these countries.